



Opinion

Importance of voting can't be stressed enough

Columnist Bob Strevey, in today's Opinion Page submission, talks about the importance of voting. The column, written far in advance of last Tuesday's election here in Norton, certainly fits in well now, considering the very poor turnout when residents of Norton picked people to sit on the city council.

Mr. Strevey's column talks in general terms how important it is to vote. We defer to Mr. Strevey. His column follows.

On Jan. 30, 2005 millions of Iraqis braved death threats, mortar attacks and suicide bombers to vote in the country's first nationwide election in more than 50 years. These people had a long period of brutal dictatorship to make them desire freedom.

Sometimes you don't know what you have until you lose it. I consider that to be one of the best lessons my Army service taught me. You enjoy sleeping in a soft bed? Not if you are camping out in a field. You like to pick your friends? The Army may send you to a new location, a new unit, to work with different people. People in the service learn to put their choices below the requirements of the country.

After being drafted into the Army in June 1966, I went through Basic and AIT at Fort Dix, New Jersey. With the mid-term elections approaching, I was anxious to get my absentee ballot. At the time, Kansas required service people to send a form signed by the commanding officer of the unit to the county clerk requesting a ballot.

When I requested a signed form, the company clerk said he was too busy. When a couple of friends and I requested forms, the duty sergeant chased us out of his office. But when some 20 members of the unit joined me in demanding the forms or we would appeal to the Inspector General, the First Sergeant gave in and had the forms signed.

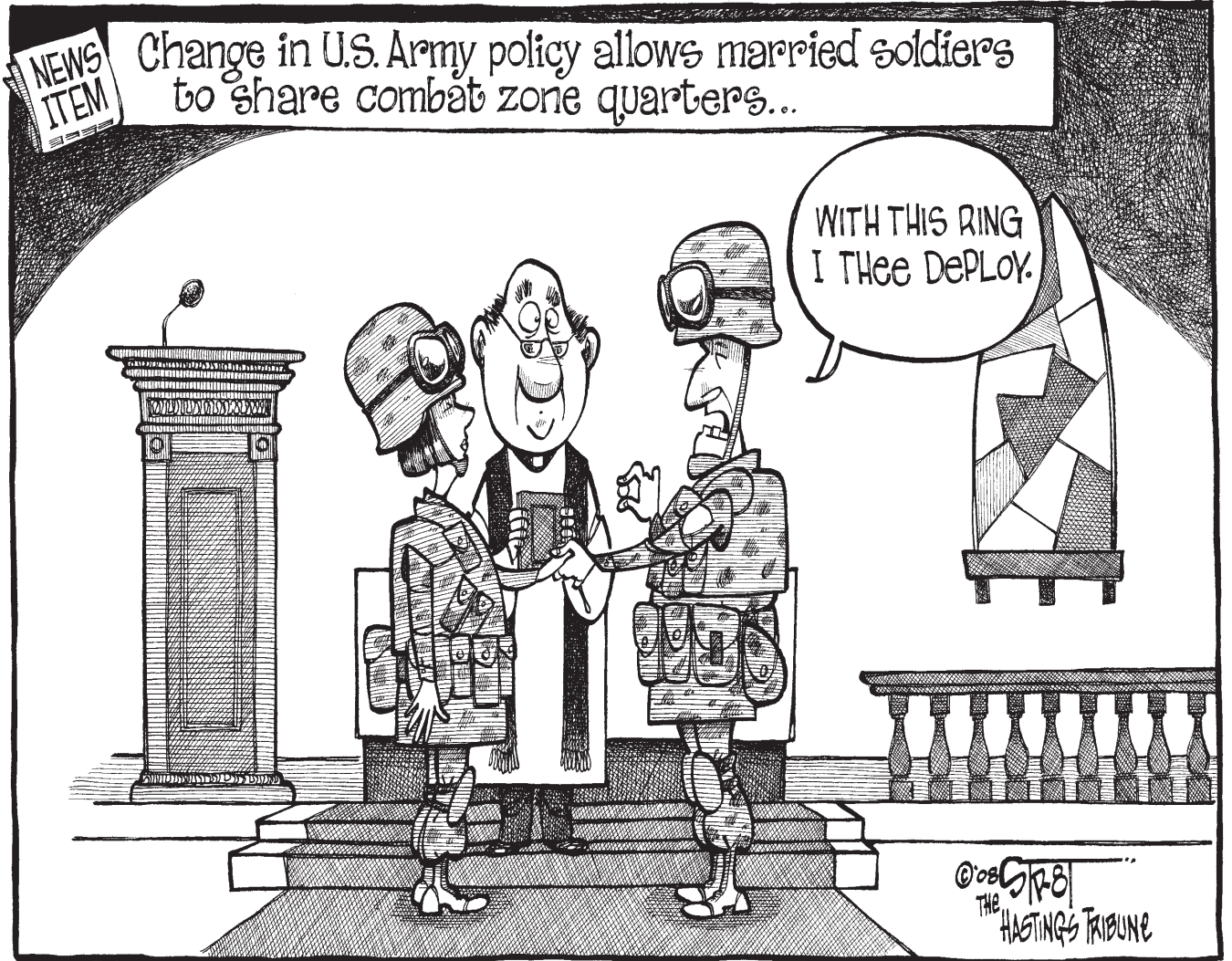
People tend to ignore their rights or take them for granted, but let someone try to deny that right and we get all excited about what is rightfully ours. I remember my Mother always wanted to take part in every election, probably because she could remember a time when women could not vote. I remember when 18 year olds got the right to vote. For a few years, they voted in strong turnouts. Now, many take it for granted, don't bother to vote or do not consider it important.

Many of the German people who voted in the 1933 national elections had voted in many earlier elections. But after Hitler came to power, the people no longer had a choice. Fidel Castro was elected by the people in Cuba to be their leader in 1958. Never since have the Cuban people had a choice.

I do not know what the future holds for this country, but this I do know: *Freedom is precious.* The right to vote, the right to choose our own leaders is a tremendous privilege. Like other privileges, one must use it or lose it.

(bkstrevey@hotmail.com)

Citizen Duties Bob Strevey



Here's my latest excuse for being late

I've used lots of different excuses for being late to work — all legit, of course. But, this is the first time I've ever used, "I'm going to be late. I have four chickens to dress."

That's right, we're still putting chickens in the freezer. Jim took care of six Saturday and the other four Sunday night. By "took care of" you know what I mean, right? He plucks and cleans; I cut up and freeze.

My mother would shake her head in disapproval if she knew I don't save the backs and neck. She always said they were her favorite pieces. I think she said that because they were the pieces that were left after everyone else had their pick.

My thought is my time is worth something and it's not worth it to mess with necks and backs. So, I just boil them, pick

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



the meat and use it for chicken salad or sandwiches. I'm not wasting it, but I'm not wasting my time, either. Whether it's the time to cut it up or the time to fry it.

Anyway, the cut-up birds are in the freezer and the "scrawny" pieces are in the roaster slow cooking till the meat falls off the bone.

Another sure sign spring is coming, besides yard sales, is all the lawn care commercials on television. I saw one this

morning that claimed to kill dandelions and crabgrass but to not harm the lawn. My fear is if I killed all the dandelions and crabgrass, I wouldn't have any green left on my lawn, at all.

I want to introduce you to two new characters. My cousin, Barb, her husband, Art, and their "baby", Valentino. Valentino is a 120 pound chocolate Lab who, they say, is the most perfect dog in the world. When I asked Barb to send me some pictures they sent photos of Valentino.

This threesome will soon arrive to set up housekeeping in a little town not far from us. They have found a cute house and are excited about life out here in "God's Country".

It's going to be fun to have family this close. We're already planning a special Fourth of July celebration.

Thumbs Up

To... Pam and Joan, why not taste-test in the line at the high school? Great story. (e-mail)

To... Teresa Schulze, on the outstanding honor accorded. (e-mail)

To... John Engelbert, on your appointment. Well deserved. (e-mail)

To... 4-H'ers on your Regional wins! (called in)

To... Jerry Jones, on the tremendous job he has done for the City of Norton. He will be greatly missed on the city council. (e-mail)

To... All the high school musicians on your effort at the music contest in Oberlin, to their teachers for all their hard work, and to the parents and superintendent for being there to support them Saturday. (e-mail)

(To submit a name or names, e-mail tom.d@nwkansan.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)

Your political connection

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School is much more than test scores

Sometimes we think chaos only occurs in families with one parent or limited income or dysfunctional behaviors, but if the truth be known it occurs in all families at one point or another. I remember thinking one time as we prepared all five children for church; no one would ever guess our destination. With "loud" prompting to brush teeth, pick up pajamas, eat breakfast came the usual sibling banter about "mom, he touched me" or "... took my shoes and won't give them back." Then we would walk out the door calmly and quietly like the "Leave It to Beaver" family. Talk about chaos.

Most of us view our school system as a supplement to a child's life. Recently I interviewed a young boy with few positives to share about home. For him, school was where everything good in his life occurred. He felt safe, loved and appreciated, but most of all school offers boundaries and no chaos. School is not

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



supplemental to his life, it is his life.

The occasional chaos is to be expected but a life of chaos will be reflected in a child's behavior for years to come, if not for a lifetime.

During this presidential campaign, we have heard some acknowledgment of the need to revamp our educational system. At the top of that list must be to rescind *No Child Left Behind*, but in the midst of this needs to be the realization that school is much more than just academics. It does not matter whether it should be or not, in today's society in the U.S., it just is.

Effects of child abuse not always apparent

April is Child Abuse Prevention Awareness month, and while the physical signs of abuse may be readily apparent, the effects of emotional abuse are not as easily recognizable yet can last a lifetime. Emotional abuse includes child neglect, unreasonable threats, put-downs and using extreme forms of discipline or punishment. Neglect of a child also involves withholding love, affection and physical attention that is needed for their well-being and healthy development.

Children depend on their parents and the adults in their life for security, acceptance and guidance. Yet, they are most often abused by someone they know and trust such as a parent, relative or family friend.

When they are harmed by an adult, especially someone they know, they will become fearful and uncertain, and their emotional development can be seriously limited.

As a result, when these children reach adolescence and then adulthood, are often unable to express their feelings properly,

High Plains Mental Health Karen Schueler

or they have difficulty understanding or relating to the feelings and needs of others. A lack of trust plus poor emotional development makes it very difficult to form and maintain meaningful relationships as an adult, including marriage and parenthood. In addition, adults who were abused as children often treat their own children the same, and the cycle of abuse continues.

Adults who abuse children come from all social and economic backgrounds. They usually have a history of being abused as a child, low self-esteem, and poor control over their own feelings and emotions. Contributing factors include a lack of understanding of child development, poor parenting skills, strained personal relationships, stress, and substance abuse.

If abuse is obvious or even suspected, it needs to be reported in order to protect the child from further harm and to get help for the family and adults involved. Every state has laws requiring certain people such as teachers, child-care providers, health-care workers, and mental health professionals to report known or suspected cases, and there are many resources available for help and referral information.

(Contributed by Karen Schueler, MS, LCPC, Manager, PEO - Prevention, Education and Outreach Department. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Prevention, Education, and Outreach Department (PEO), 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601. Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality.) Internet site: www.highplainsmentalhealth.com.)

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